

I'm Certified. Now What?

Certification as a Small Business (SB) or Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE) is only the first step to obtain a contract with the state.

Follow these tips from state buyers

Keep your business information current on your certification profile to receive important information.

Respond quickly to email and voicemail messages, even if you can't provide the requested product or service. Failing to respond to an inquiry from the state's buyers can cause you to lose future opportunities.

Make sure you are properly licensed and insured.

Research past procurements to learn what companies won similar contracts in the past, and for what price.

Be thorough. Submit a complete and timely bid package that complies with all aspects of the state's solicitation. One missing item can dismiss your entire bid package. For clarification, contact the contracting/purchasing official.

Research which departments purchase what you sell

Find out which agencies buy your company's products or services, and at what price, at caleprocure.ca.gov.

- Click *Get Public Procurement Information*. Then, click *View Past Purchases*.
- Search keywords under *Description* or UNSPSC classification codes (in *Advanced Search*). Choose a department to learn which products and services they procure.
- Click *Purchase Document #* to view the UNSPSC each item was listed under.

List the right keywords and UNSPSC codes

State agencies use keywords and UNSPSC codes to find certified businesses that provide the goods or services they need. Buyers for the state will offer your firm work or request a quote if you accurately and fully list what your business provides on your certification profile.

- Think about what a buyer would search for to find your business.
- List synonyms and different versions of keywords – for example, *lamps and lights*, or *paper and ream*, or *electricity and electrical*.
- Explore UNSPSC categories at dgsapps.dgs.ca.gov/PD/UNSPSCSearch. List relevant *class* and *commodity* codes.
- Compare your keywords and UNSPSC codes to your competitors. Go to caleprocure.ca.gov, click *Quicklinks* and then *Find certified SB/DVBE*. Type a keyword and click *Search* to view businesses that list that keyword on their profiles.
- Log on to Cal eProcure and click *Amend SB/DVBE* on your profile page to update your keywords and UNSPSC classifications.

Sign up for ad notifications on caleprocure.ca.gov

Get notified of opportunities for your business's products and services listed on Cal eProcure. When new solicitations list a certain keyword or UNSPSC, you can receive automatic notifications.

- In the top right of Cal eProcure, click your user name, then click *Manage notifications*. Under *UNSPSC section*, insert the codes that you want notification of when included in new solicitations. List many codes so you don't miss out.

Find subcontracting opportunities

Many state contracts require prime contractors to use certified subcontractors for a portion of their work.

- Identify prime contractors that work with the state in *Get Public Procurement Information* on caleprocure.ca.gov. Contact prime contractors directly to introduce your business.
- Subcontractors can place ads on Cal eProcure bids to seek work with potential primes. Ads are free; list your Certification ID in all ads.

Market your business to state departments

SB/DVBE Advocates are state employees who can assist you with information about contracting with their department and advocate using your firm in future procurements.

- Search for *Advocate Directory* at www.dgs.ca.gov/pd
- When contacting advocates, include your company name, contact information, certification ID, and capabilities statement. Target specific agencies.

Work with local government partners

Many local city and county governments, utility and transit agencies, state colleges, and special districts accept the state's business certifications for their own procurement goals.

Find a list and links at:
www.dgs.ca.gov/PD-Reciprocity

Attend DGS outreach events

The Department of General Services attends and sponsors events to provide certified businesses advice on applying for work with state agencies.

Find upcoming events, go to:
www.dgs.ca.gov/pd/events

Use free business resources

Several organizations receive federal and state funding to provide free advice and resources to businesses. Your local Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) or Small Business Development Center (SBDC) can provide you with many resources in person or by phone.

Find PTACs and SBDCs at:
www.sba.gov/local-assistance

Nationwide PTACs are also listed at:
www.aptac-us.org

Free mentoring and education:
www.score.org

Contact veteran business organizations

CalVet
www.calvet.ca.gov

Elite SDVOB Network
www.elitesdvob.org

National Veterans Transition Services
www.nvtsi.org

Southwest Veterans Business Resource Center
www.swvbrc.org

U.S. Veteran Business Alliance
www.gousvba.org

Veterans Business Outreach Center
www.vbocix.org

Veterans In Business Network
www.vibnetwork.org